

***The Examiner's Rejections***

In this Office Action, the Examiner rejected independent claim 207, under 35 U.S.C. § 102, as being anticipated by the Champa's US patent 5,315,633. The Examiner did, however, indicate that dependent claim 208 would be allowable if it incorporated the limitations of claim 207.

The Examiner made similar observations about claims 71 and 209-210. The Examiner also indicated that claim 218 and its dependent claims are allowable.

***Applicants' Amendments***

The Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's characterization of Champa. Nonetheless, the Applicants have amended the claims without prejudice and to expedite allowance.

Specifically, independent claim 207 has been amended to incorporate the limitation of allowable claim 208. Accordingly, claim 207 should be allowable along with all claims dependent on it.


The only other independent claim is claim 218. The Examiner has indicated that this claim is allowable. Consequently, all claims depending from claim 218 should also be allowable.

Claims 57, 62-65, 187-193, 197-199 and 202-206 were, according to the Examiner, withdrawn from further consideration as being drawn to a non-elected species. But, these claims are dependent on allowable generic independent claims. Accordingly, these claims are also allowable, in terms of 37 C.F.R. § 1.141 as they include all the limitations of a generic claim.

For these reasons, therefore, Applicants submit that all claims are allowable and request allowance to that effect at the Examiner's earliest convenience. Should the Examiner believe a further conference will expedite the allowance of this application, please contact the undersigned.

Finally, a clean copy of all the claims is attached for the Examiner's convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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